

## Guidelines for Parent Access to Student Assessment Records

The South Dakota assessment program encompasses standards-based assessments in the areas of English language arts (ELA), Mathematics, and Science as well as aligned alternative assessments for students with the most severe cognitive disabilities. The assessments include:

- South Dakota Math and English Language Arts Assessments in grades 3,4,5,6,7,8, & 11
- South Dakota Math and English Language Arts Alternate Assessments in grades 3,4,5,6,7,8, & 11 for students with the most severe cognitive disabilities
- South Dakota Science Assessments in grades 5, 8, & 11
- South Dakota Science Alternate Assessments in grades 5, 8, & 11 for students with the most severe cognitive disabilities

These assessments are utilized to report valid and reliable information on school and student achievement in English language arts, mathematics and science taught in public elementary and secondary schools, and they form the foundation of the state accountability system. Student responses are maintained according to the state records retention policy on file with the state Bureau of Administration.

This document explains the process for facilitation of parental access to assessments and the test questions their student saw in the assessment. The document explains how parents/legal guardians and/or students, at least 18 years old or emancipated, can have the opportunity to view their child’s assessment as provided by the Family Educational Rights and Protection Act (FERPA) and in SDCL 13-3-55.2.

The access process is set up to help safeguard the integrity of the state assessments and protects secure test questions from public release. It is important and permissible for families to discuss their child’s performance on the assessment, though individuals are not permitted to share test questions in any manner that would constitute a security breach or jeopardize the test’s integrity.

### **Timelines**

Tests are taken in the spring, and then processed. Test processing includes post-test administration time that includes item scoring and reporting of scores. Tests are available for review according to the following schedule:

| <b>Test</b>                               | <b>Available for Review</b> |
|---|-----------------------------|
| SD Math & ELA Assessments                 | September                   |
| SD Math & ELA Alternate Assessments       | October                     |
| South Dakota Science Assessment           | September                   |
| South Dakota Science Alternate Assessment | September                   |

All tests are available for review for one year after the test is administered.

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## Process for Accessing Tests

The following steps detail the process for accommodating parents/ legal guardians and/or students, at least 18 years old or emancipated requests to view their child's assessment responses:

1. Parent/legal guardian obtains request form from the state website
2. Parent/legal guardian fills out the request form and mails it to the South Dakota Department of Education **after** they have received their child's *Individual Score Report* from their local school district, **and** the availability period of the Request to View Process has opened. *If unable to locate the child's individual score report, parent/legal guardians should contact their child's school.*
3. The Department receives the completed request form, verifies the information provided, and submits a request to the testing contractor to pull any needed test material from the archive.
4. The Department notifies the school district of the request and begins setting up a time and location for secure review with the district test coordinator.
5. The district test coordinator and Department will contact the parent/legal guardian to schedule a test review. Per FERPA guidelines, a viewing date must be offered that falls within 45 days of the receipt by the Department of the fully completed request form and the availability of the request to view process timeline. Only parents/legal guardians may view test materials. Students over the age of 18 or emancipated youth may also view education records. If logistics permit, the Department may schedule simultaneous viewings for several parents/legal guardians. If a parent requests to view multiple content (subject) areas, these should all be viewed in the same sitting, with up to an hour provided for review of each area.
6. Upon conclusion of the parent/guardian viewing, the Department will collect the *Parent Certification and Security Form(s)* with parent/legal guardian signatures and will return all secure materials to their proper storage setting.
7. The state testing vendor retains the test materials in secure storage, according to the state's data retention plan.

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## **Protocol for Parent/Legal Guardian Review of State Assessment Records**

1. Schedule a one-hour session at the school district for the review of each of the student's tests. This time constraint is meant to facilitate scheduling and should provide ample time for the review session. If warranted, additional time may be provided either at the initial review session, or at a later date. Parents must be offered a review date that falls within the 45-day FERPA deadline. If a parent is unable to schedule on the dates or times offered within this timeframe, a later date may be scheduled.
2. A state assessment specialist and an employee of the district should be available during the review. One of these two must be in a review area at all times. The district employee in attendance should be familiar with the assessment and score reports and should be prepared to answer questions that may arise about testing procedures in the district.
3. Test materials may only be viewed – no recording, deleting, or altering permitted.
4. Note taking is **not allowed** during the review. Notes may be taken during any discussions prior to or following the review. All electronic devices must be turned off and kept out of view or left with district support staff outside of the viewing area.
5. A copy of the *Parent Certification and Security Form* must be provided to parents/legal guardians. Parents/legal guardians are required to sign this form prior to the viewing session. This certifies that they are the parent/legal guardian of the student and that they agree not to share test questions in any manner that would constitute a security breach or jeopardize the test's integrity.
6. After review, secure testing materials and online testing information will be returned to the Department and the state's testing vendor.

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